

HC 46-47- Christ has Departed; Christ is Present

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: One of the toughest things on a family is if the father had to go out of country or maybe out of province to work for an extended period of time. Even with modern technology it is not the same when you are away from those loved ones. It is great to have texting, Skype and a long distance plan, but there is something that is always missing. You want to see, feel, and touch your loved ones. But you are limited. And that sometimes can put strains 处紧张状态 on relationships. But not so with your Lord. He is not limited as a father might be...or a husband. You will find out today from God's Word that the Lord Jesus has departed in his body but his is unquestionably still really present on earth with you today.

Our headings are: Jesus Christ went to heaven, and Jesus Christ is on Earth.

Our goals are: You will find peace, confidence, and strength knowing that you never alone but that Jesus Christ is always with you.

Jesus Christ Went to Heaven

46 Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SAYING, "HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"? A. That Christ, while his disciples watched, was lifted up from the earth to heaven and will be there for our good until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.

1. Many witnesses were able to see the glorious ascension of Jesus Christ on a mountain outside of Jerusalem. These witnesses were both Jews and Gentiles. Look at two of Luke's accounts.

Luke 24:50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven 定睛望天 as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven 望天? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

It is not surprising that most people don't argue against Jesus' ascension. Why not? Hundreds had seen him resurrected...and what was more remarkable than that? A dead person being raised was far more amazing than a living man being taken up into heaven. But what a glorious sight this must have been! And then the angel's instruction after...that would have amazed them even more. He said: "Jesus was going to come again!"

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out 涂抹, so that times of refreshing 安乐 may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

2. In heaven Jesus' body was transformed into a glorious body – a body that could exist in heaven, and yet keep, to some degree, the form that he had on earth...like the nail scars in his hand. Because of the glorious transformation, there is no flesh and blood in heaven. This physical presence of Jesus in heaven denies the repugnant 可恶 doctrines of transubstantiation 变质说 that the Roman Catholics teach, and consubstantiation 同质说 that the Lutherans believe. The bread and wine of Holy Communion cannot become the real body and blood of the Lord as the Roman Catholic argue. His real body is in heaven. And Jesus' real body is not somehow under or above the bread and the wine as the Lutheran's argue. Jesus went to heaven and his real body is there—it is not here. No man can be in two places at once.

3. In heaven the Lord Jesus sat down again at the right hand of his Father. To sit at the Father right hand meant that Jesus Christ has power to help and position to plead for your good – you his children. (A right hand person is a person with power and influence.) Your adversary 对手; the Devil, cannot stand against your Heavenly Advocate... who daily petitions the Father for you. God hears the requests of his Son and rejects the Devil request to harm them.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Furthermore, as one sitting down...it means Jesus Christ's work on earth is done and he can now rule over his church. But why isn't Jesus on earth to rule over people on earth? Jesus is so great that he does not have to physically be present on earth to rule over his kingdom.

4. From heaven Jesus Christ equips you with gifts for your work – ruling under his dominion until he returns. These gifts would help them live for his glory and fight against their spiritual enemies. The Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 68 and confirmed that the Jesus Christ’s ascension was not just a triumph... but that he continues to work for his children.

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this, "He ascended" —what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Notice Verse 10. Jesus had to fill the things (or fulfill) the things which were spoken about him. That was Psalm 68. Psalm 68:18 You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there. 19 Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah 20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. 21 But God will wound the head of His enemies, The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in His trespasses.

In Psalm 68, before the gifts are mentioned, the church sings of the victory procession of the warrior king. The king mighty in battle brought home the booty and the captive soldiers and slaves walked through the streets of Jerusalem to the temple that Jehovah would be glorified. And then they gave out gifts. Similarly, after Jesus ascended on high and won the victory, He as the powerful one, gives gifts to men to enrich and equip them for their God-given tasks. So the Jesus Christ is not in heaven singing “In the sweet, by and by.” He is actively protecting his people, preaching to the unregenerate and destroying his enemies.

5. This position at the right hand of the Father is a continuous position that Jesus Christ has in heaven, unlike the priests in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 7:23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

Jesus Christ is On Earth

47 Q. BUT ISN'T CHRIST WITH US UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD AS HE PROMISED US?
A. Christ is true man and true God. In his human nature Christ is not now on earth; but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit he is not absent from us for a moment.

1. The fact that Jesus Christ is physically in heaven does not limit his Divine nature which is – omnipresent

2. Jesus Christ himself spoke of his ever presence among his people.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen.

You will remember that Jesus has two natures: his human nature and his Divine nature. His two natures are never mixed or confused. He has a glorified human nature where he is now in heaven (and his Divine nature is also in heaven). But his Divine nature is never limited by space as his human body is. So when he promised to be with his church always, you can take him at his word.

3. More specifically, Jesus is present on earth as your Savior through his Holy Spirit. He clearly promised his Spirit – his Spirit who would communicate all things necessary for Christians to know through God’s Word, comfort all Christians, convict the world of sin, and call upon the Father for all Christians. Christians don’t need to pray to Virgin Mary or dead saints. They pray through Jesus Christ who is present by his Spirit.

John 16:5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name. He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

The Psalmist had long ago spoken of the ever present Spirit who would do all of these same things about which Jesus Christ spoke, especially comfort the struggling!

Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

This is a comfort to the Christian...though it is a terror to the non-believer.

4. All this was part of God's plan all along (Psalm 68, Ephesians 4)...not something developed by Jesus when he was on earth. So those who believe that Jesus will come and set up a physical kingdom in this world are solely deceived and are deceiving others. His Spirit will be here until the end of the earth...he will not come back and establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem.

5. Jesus did not redeem you to let you die alone...or abandon you as orphans 孤儿 to fend 谋生 for yourselves. He knew that for your full salvation he had to always be with you through his Holy Spirit (the Comforter is not Mohamed as the Muslims argue). The Holy Spirit of God is in you to pray for you (This is something Mohamed cannot do since he is dead.) and the Holy Spirit of God is to give you courage in the face of challenges, words to speak when you are presented with the opportunity, comfort when you are persecuted, and assurance that you are always God's child.

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

Conclusion:

Jesus went to heaven to prepare a home for you and he will take you there one day. He prays for you so you will be equipped to do his work. But, he is present on earth as well. He is here in his Divinity, majesty, grace, and Holy Spirit, though he is not here in his body. You need him to be in heaven. You need him to be on earth.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. Jesus Christ never leaves you nor forsakes 抛弃 you. Though you cannot see Jesus now, he is everywhere present. (Now combine his omnipresence with his omniscience 无所不知 with his omnipotence 无所不能 and see what you get!) You have the God of the universe with you...and more than that, he has a personal stake in you...he redeemed you with his blood. Do you think for one minute that he would give his life for you and then leave you? 2. Don't become preoccupied 专注于 with heaven – perform your duties on earth. Acts 1:11 – gives you implied instruction in how you are to live. Virtually the angel said: "Why are you staring into heaven, don't you know you have work to do now?" So this message is for you to do today. 3. Everything you need to work for your Redeemer he offers to you, so work with confidence and work without fear. Live and speak for him.

Finally, if you see Jesus as simply a good man who set a good example, you still have your sins in you and will die in them and go to hell. If you see Jesus as Redeemer who died on the cross for the sins of the world...who has gone to heaven...who offers his Spirit to those who believe... and you ask him for his credit, then he will set you free from your sins, make you his child, and offer you a heavenly hope.